



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION OUTCOME REPORT

May 2024



# IN THIS REPORT



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01



# Introduction

# trustea Impact

The tea cultivation industry in India is not only a major contributor to the nation's economy but also plays a pivotal role in the social and economic well-being of millions of people. In the past few years, the industry stands at a crucial juncture where sustainability, environmental concerns, the livelihood of workers, and workplace safety have become focal points. This publication presents the baseline data for the Indian tea cultivation sector, offering valuable insights into the current state of affairs and serving as a foundation for future improvement in reference to the trustea Standard

This report synthesizes recent independent research on how trustea Standard requirements affect Estate, factory & STG workers, and ecosystems. It also underlines our specific expertise in the field, sharing knowledge, and spreading awareness on sustainability to support our vision of **“high quality and safe tea for consumers, good livelihoods for producers, workers, and their families, whilst at all times caring for the natural environment”** in Indian tea

“ \_\_\_\_\_  
high quality and safe  
tea for consumers,  
good livelihoods for  
producers, workers, and  
their families, whilst at  
all times caring for the  
natural environment  
\_\_\_\_\_ ”



# trustea Highlights



**704**

Number of verified entities



**383131**

Number of female workers



**301001**

Number of male workers



**130250**

Number of STGs



**421**

Number of Audits done  
(In last one year)



**954.43 Mn kgs (Approx.)**

Volume of verified tea (as on December 2023)



# trustea Program Reach

**Data upto December 2023**

Progression of Volume

 **954.43 M KGS**

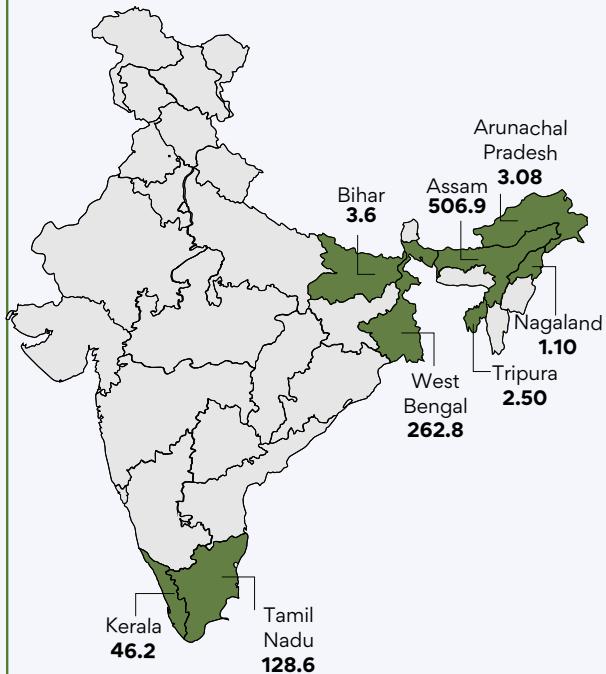
tea verified as on December  
2023

Workers Reach

 **3,83,131**  
Women

 **3,01,001**  
Men

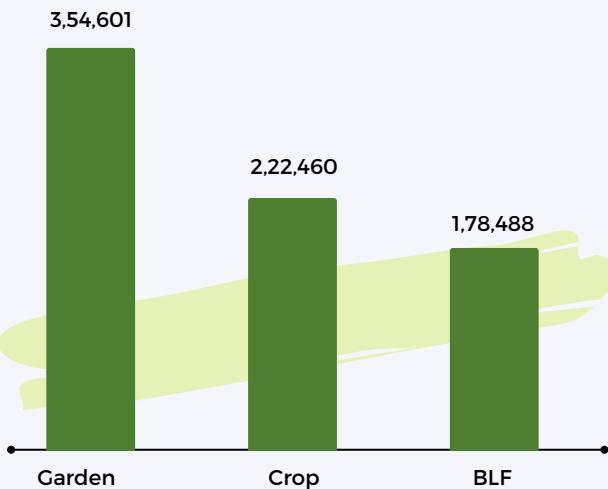
Cumulative Volume



**TOTAL 954.43** Note: The depiction of the boundaries in the map is for general illustration purpose only

**704** Entities Verified | **24,524** STGs Added in 2023

EA Covered (in hectares)



Note: The tea garden area includes the crop area of the garden and they are not mutually exclusive

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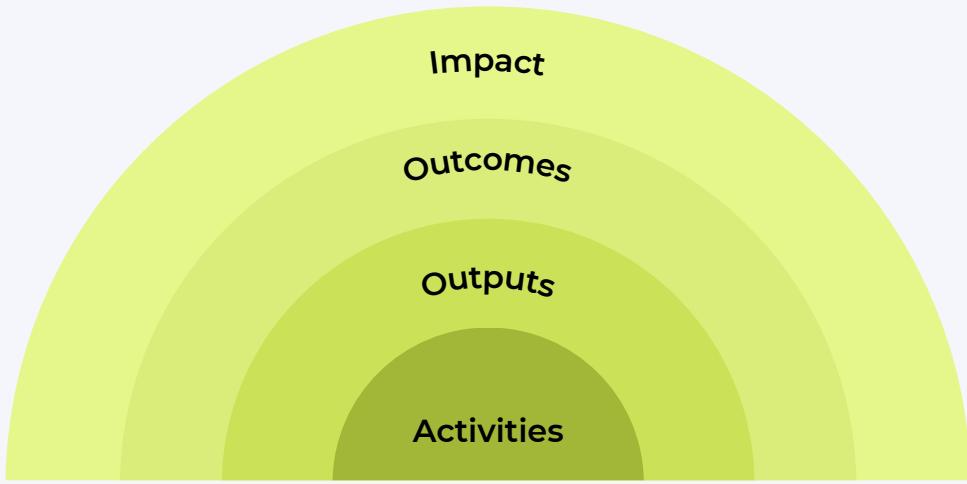
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02



Theory of Change

**It presents the pathway for trustea to achieve its sustainability goal**



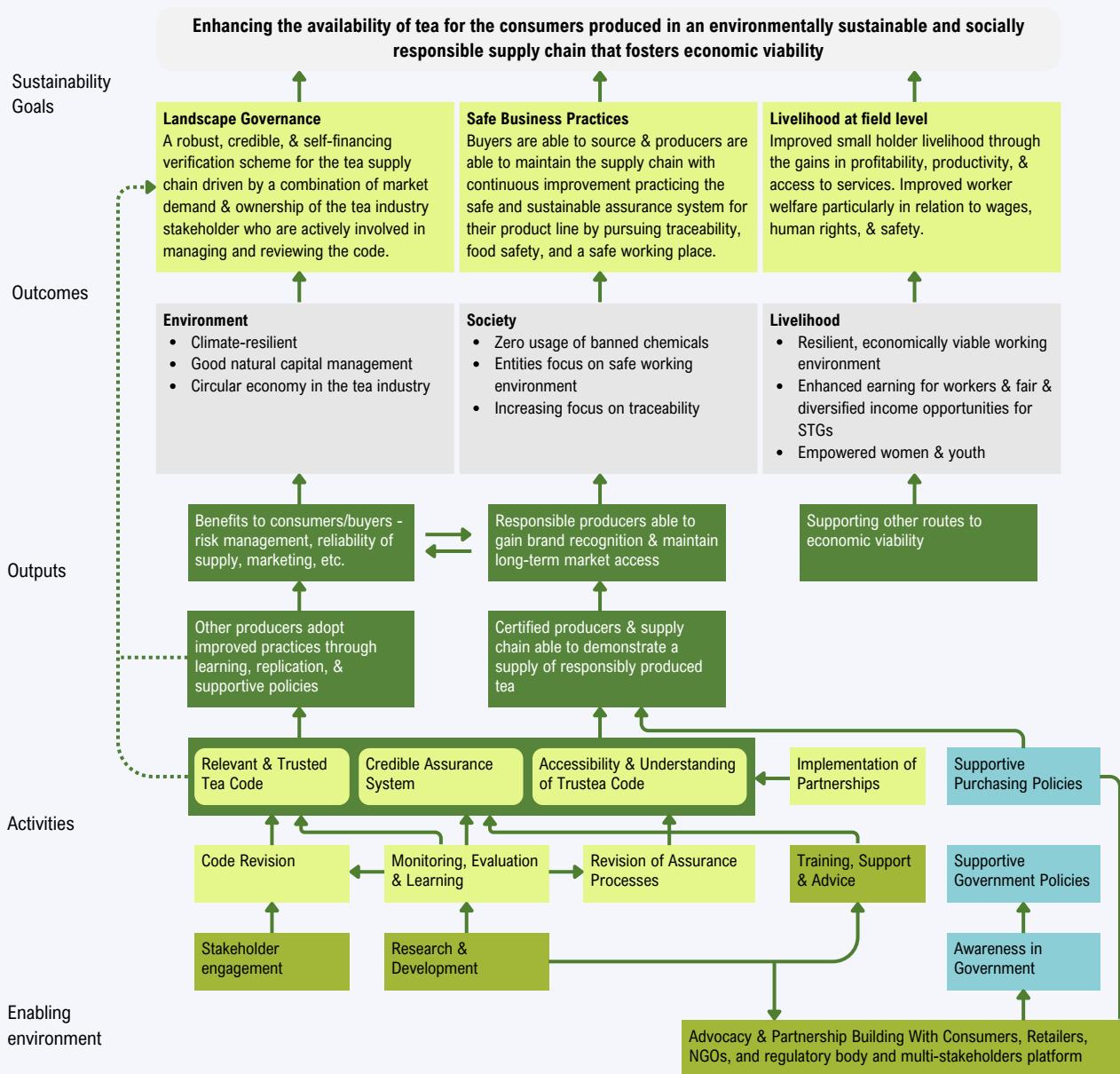
# trustea sustainability goal

An Indian tea industry providing high quality and safe tea to consumers, good livelihoods for producers, workers and their families, whilst at all times caring for the natural environment.

## trustea Theory of Change

### Assumptions

- Increased focus of government/ regulations on sustainable production
- Supportive policy environment for tea production
- There is demand for tea
- Increased awareness among consumers on sustainable production
- Industry values sustainable production
- Effective support provided by IPs
- Good governance of trustea
- Effective management of implementation agencies and CB partnerships
- Good financial management
- Good Human resource availability and management
- Availability of funding for trustea



# Theory of change



## Activities

- Code revision
- Revision of assurance process
- Stakeholder engagement
- Monitoring code and processes
- Research and Development
- Training, support and advice
- Implementation partnership



## Outputs

- Capacitated entities
- trustea certifications
- Adoption of improved practices
- Certified producers able to demonstrate supply of responsibly produced tea
- Relevant and credible
- trustea code
- Credible assurance system
- Accessibility and understanding of trustea code



## Outcomes

- Entities commitment towards sustainability
- Environmental improvement
- Societal improvements
- Economic improvements



## Impacts

- Sectoral and Governance level sustainable practices
- Sustainable Business Practices
- Sustainable practices and livelihood in the field and among communities associated with tea production



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# 03



# Monitoring & Evaluation

# Framework



To track the progress of activities and outputs being achieved, which provides insights into the current state of affairs and serves as a foundation for future improvement in reference to the trustea Standard.



To assess outcomes and evaluate impacts



To ascertain the extent to which the desired change and the sustainability goal has been achieved

## Using objective quantitative indicators and qualitative data

trustea M&E is an improvement function

It provides feedback on deviations and recommendations for course corrections to achieve the desired outcomes and impacts

trustea M&E framework fulfils ISEAL Impact code requirements

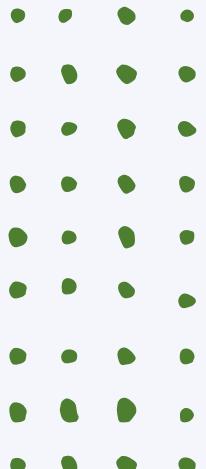


# Scope



## Monitoring

- Track the progress of various activities of trustea at regular frequency through data analysis and on-site research.
- Measure the outputs achieved through various activities, using objective and measurable indicators, as defined in the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA).
- Assess the quality of the outputs being generated against the timelines and resources utilized
- Share monitoring findings with the stakeholders.
- Provide independent feedback to the management on the progress and the quality of outputs and outcomes being achieved.
- Flag any risk of deviation from the planned activities, outputs and outcomes and provide recommendations for the course correction.

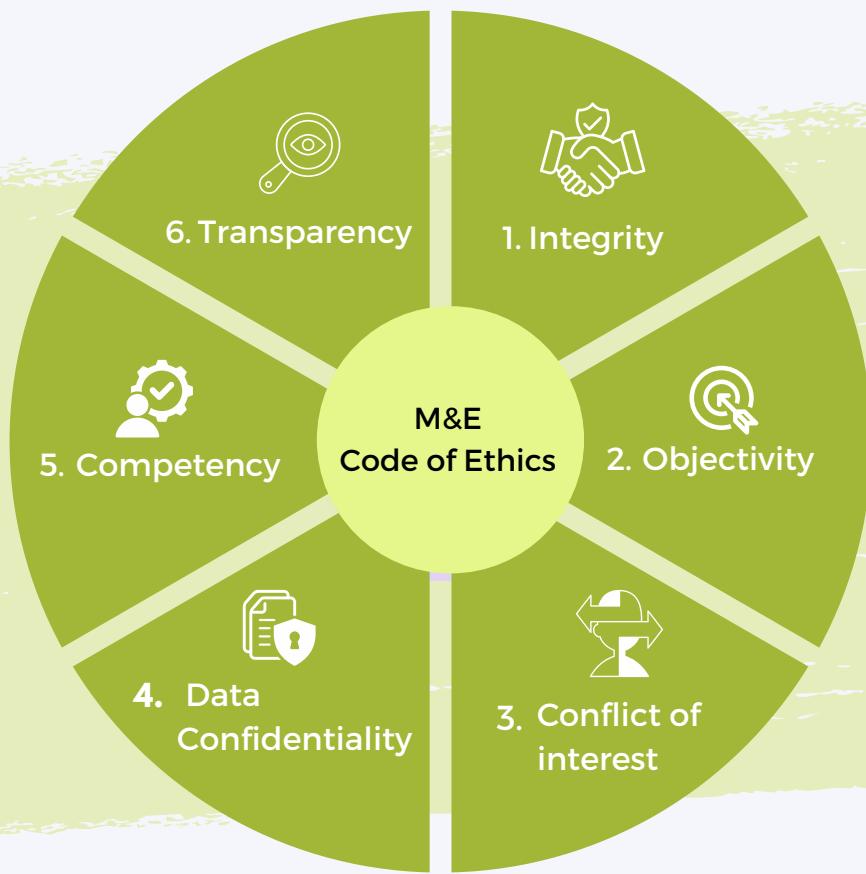


## Evaluation

- Periodically conduct an evaluation of outcomes and impact.
- Initiate and support in conducting evaluation of outcomes and impacts through independent external agencies.
- Make the result of M&E available to the stakeholders including the Board, management, partners and the public at large.
- Ensure that evaluation findings are integrated into decision-making and strengthen the code and verification process.



# Code of Ethics



Having a robust Code of Ethics is a foundational element of any Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system, ensuring the integrity and credibility of the process. By adhering to such a code trustea Sustainable Tea Foundation upholds principles like integrity, objectivity, transparency, competency, data confidentiality, and conflict of interest. Integrity dictates that the MEL team conduct their work honestly without being biased, maintaining the trust of stakeholders. Objectivity requires unbiased data collection and analysis, providing accurate and fair insights. Transparency involves openly sharing methodologies and findings, allowing for external scrutiny and accountability.

Competency demands that MEL practitioners possess the necessary skills and knowledge to execute their roles effectively. Data confidentiality protects sensitive information and respects privacy. Lastly, managing conflicts of interest is crucial to maintain impartiality and trustworthiness throughout the MEL process. A well-implemented Code of Ethics ensures that the MEL system operates with the highest standards, delivering reliable and valuable insights while maintaining the confidence of all involved parties.

# Logical Framework (LFA)

**LFA is an integral part of the M&E Framework. It contains :**

- To track the progress of activities and outputs being achieved
- To assess outcomes and evaluate impacts
- To ascertain the extent to which the desired change and the sustainability goal has been achieved



# Research tools

**M&E framework contains research tools for gathering data during monitoring**

Research Tool	Purpose
ET 1: Questionnaire for Entity Practices	For data collection from the Sr. management of entities regarding entity practices and data on outputs and outcome indicators
ET 2: Questionnaire for Entity Staff and Workers	For data collection from the staff or workers of entities, regarding staff related practices and outcome indicators
ET3: Questionnaire for feedback of Entities	For gathering feedback from Entities on Code, Certification process and support
IP 1: IP Monitoring Questionnaire	For primary data collection from the management of IPs
IP 2: Consultant Survey	For primary data collection from consultants of IPs
CB 1: CB Monitoring Questionnaire	For primary data collection from the management of CBs
CB 2: Auditor Survey	For primary data collection from auditors of CBs
EX 1: Exit survey	For conducting exit interviews for IPs and CBs dropping out of trustea partnership
CS 1: Consumer Survey	For gathering feedback from tea consumers

# Key indicators

**Indicators have been developed for tracking –  
Activities, Outputs, Outcomes**

## Activities Indicators

Activity	LFA provides indicators for
Code revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Frequency and period of code revisions</li></ul>
Assurance process revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Frequency and period assurance process revisions</li></ul>
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tracking Meetings and communications with stakeholders</li><li>Tracking Frequency of communication</li><li>Tracking Effectiveness of grievance and appeal handling</li></ul>
R&D for code or process improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tracking secondary and primary research done for code or process improvement</li></ul>
M&E for code or process improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tracking code and process related monitoring and changes proposed</li></ul>
Training and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tracking Online and offline trainings done for various stakeholders</li><li>Tracking of e-learning outreach and training certifications</li><li>Tracking handholding support to entities through IPs</li><li>Tracking gap analysis and NOC</li></ul>
Implementation partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Indicators for tracking IP capacity and satisfaction</li></ul>

## Output Indicators

Activity	LFA provides indicators for
Code revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOCs</li> <li>• Registrations for certifications</li> </ul>
trustea certifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CB capacity for certification</li> <li>• Outreach of certifications</li> <li>• Satisfaction with certification process</li> </ul>
Non-member entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First time registrations and support</li> <li>• First time certifications</li> </ul>
Entity ability to demonstrate responsibly sourced tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sale of certified tea</li> <li>• Usage of Tracetea</li> </ul>
Relevance and credibility of code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance and recognition of trustea code and certification</li> <li>• Usage of code and certification– domestic and international</li> <li>• Financial sustainability of trustea and other stakeholders</li> </ul>
Credible assurance system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of System Assurance Audit</li> <li>• Feedback of stakeholders on SAA process</li> <li>• Internal Audits</li> </ul>
Understanding and accessibility of code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-learning</li> <li>• New registrations Feedback on understanding Outreach</li> </ul>



# Transparency and Sharing of reports

**trustea to share M&E reports with all relevant stakeholders and to also make certain reports public**

## **Dedicated M&E page on website**

To have M&E overview, critical indicators, contacts and important reports and summaries

## **M&E Dashboard**

To present highlight indicators – link to be shared with direct stakeholders – Board, Entities, CPs, Funders, IPs and CBs

## **Report to direct stakeholders**

Full reports of M&E – to be shared with direct stakeholders – Board, Entities, CPs, Funders, IPs and CBs

## **Reports to be made public**

Evaluation report summary or full report and summary of M&E highlights

## **Sustainability Indicators**

Sustainability has become a central tenet of the Indian tea industry, driving the adoption of practices that balance economic viability with environmental and social responsibility. Through the implementation of sustainable agricultural techniques, controlling agrochemical usage and promoting organic practices with integrated pest management, tea growers reduce their reliance on agrochemicals and minimize their environmental footprint. Water and waste management initiatives further contribute to responsible resource use.

Simultaneously, the standard focuses on improving the livelihoods of tea workers through fair labour practices, gender equity. And increased awareness of human rights-related development programs. Sustainable practices not only secure the long-term future of the Indian tea sector but also support the well-being of its workforce and the broader community, making it a model for socially and environmentally responsible agriculture.

# Key indicators

## Outcome and impact Indicators

Activity	LFA provides indicators for
Entity commitment to sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and processes</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Outcomes</b>	
Climate resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertilizer usage</li> <li>Soil fertility</li> <li>Soil conservation</li> </ul>
Natural Capital Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emissions</li> <li>Soil and water conservation practices</li> <li>Waste-water and sewage treatment</li> </ul>
Circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with other stakeholders</li> <li>Re-cycling and reuse practices</li> </ul>
Unintended environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deforestation</li> <li>Any other impact</li> </ul>
<b>Societal Outcomes</b>	
Socially responsible entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration of entities</li> <li>Child labour</li> <li>Compliance to regulations</li> <li>Working conditions for labour</li> <li>Hygiene and cleanliness</li> </ul>
Safe working environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trainings</li> <li>First-aid</li> <li>Plant and equipment safety</li> <li>usage of safety kits</li> <li>Accidents</li> </ul>

Activity	LFA provides indicators for
<b>Economic Outcomes</b>	
Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viability of trustea and stakeholders</li> </ul>
Wages and income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income and wages of workers</li> <li>• Compliances</li> <li>• Gender equality of income</li> </ul>
Sustainably produced tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volume of certified tea</li> <li>• Seal on Pack out reach</li> </ul>
Unintended impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any unintended economic impacts – loss of income due to prevention of child labour etc</li> </ul>



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# 04



Outputs and Outcomes

# Environmental

## Good Natural Capital Management

The environment is one of trustea's three pillars and Environmental issues are a high priority for trustea and its members. trustea informs and promotes initiatives that support the tea sector in tackling climate change, identifying solutions and building climate resilience. In addition, certification is critically important to drive environmental sustainability. Environmental output and outcome are two critical aspects of assessing the effectiveness of environmental initiatives and policies. Environmental output refers to the direct, measurable results of specific actions or interventions aimed at addressing environmental issues.

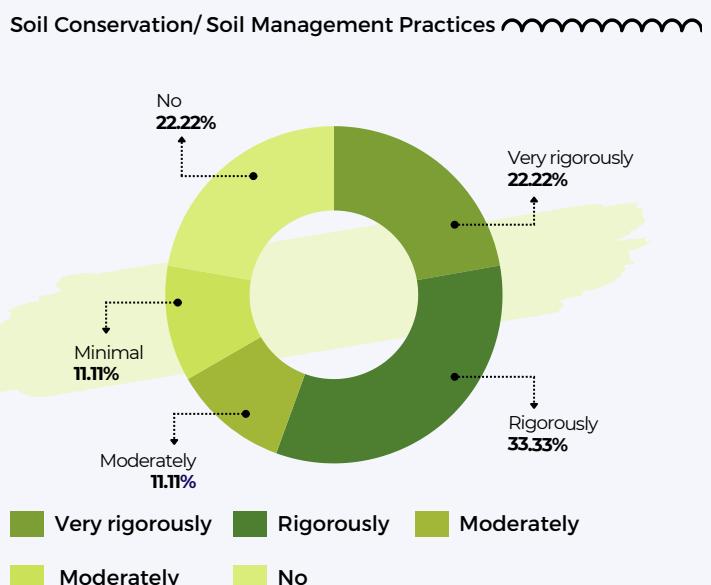
These outputs could include metrics like reduced greenhouse gas emissions, increased recycling rates, or the preservation of a specific habitat. On the other hand, environmental outcome refers to the broader, often long-term impacts and changes in the environment resulting from these outputs. For example, an increase in recycling (output) can lead to reduced landfill waste and resource conservation (outcome), contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable environment. Understanding and measuring both environmental outputs and outcomes is essential for policymakers, organizations, and communities to evaluate the success of environmental efforts and make informed decisions to protect and enhance the planet's well-being.

“

*“At Elegant, we chose trustea right from the beginning as we knew we wanted to have some measure of standards. Trustea is the only sustainability code for tea in India. And we were attracted to trustea because they help us maintain all the parameters for making good tea, while also addressing the livelihood of farmers and those dependent on us”.*

*Arup Sen, Elegant Tea Factory, Jalpaiguri*

% progress on Soil Conservation Practices	
Very rigorously	22.22
Rigorously	33.33
Moderately	11.11
Minimal	11.11
No	22.22



This section of the report uses certification and survey data to understand how certified entities are collectively making an impact.

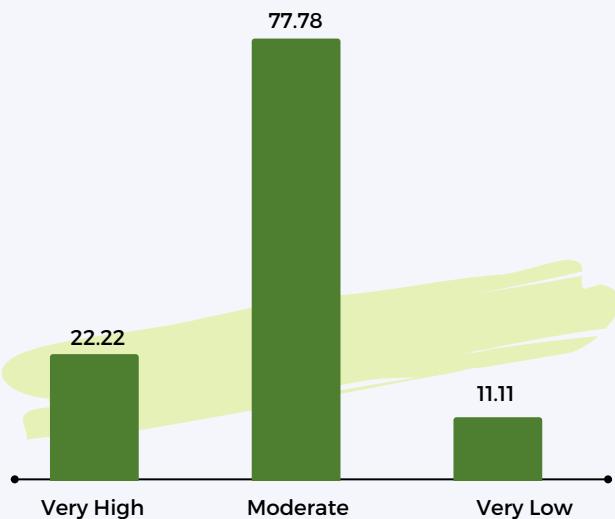
Biodiversity conservation is a fundamental aspect of sustainable tea cultivation in India. The unique and fragile ecosystems within tea-growing regions are home to a diverse range of plant and animal species. Recognizing the importance of preserving this biodiversity, efforts have been made to strike a balance between agriculture and conservation. Initiatives include preserving natural forest cover within tea estates, creating wildlife corridors, and establishing buffer zones around protected areas. By integrating biodiversity-friendly practices, the trustea Standard not only safeguards vital ecosystems but also contributes to a more resilient and sustainable future for both the industry and the environment with a primary focus on good natural capital management, and climate resilience.

**Soil conservation** is a critical practice that plays a central role in maintaining the health and productivity of our planet. It involves the deliberate and responsible management of soil resources to prevent erosion, degradation, and loss of valuable topsoil. By implementing techniques such as contour farming, terracing, and no-till agriculture, soil conservation helps protect against the adverse effects of wind and water erosion, which can lead to reduced agricultural yields and increased sedimentation in water bodies.



Level of Soil Fertility / Nutrients in Soil 

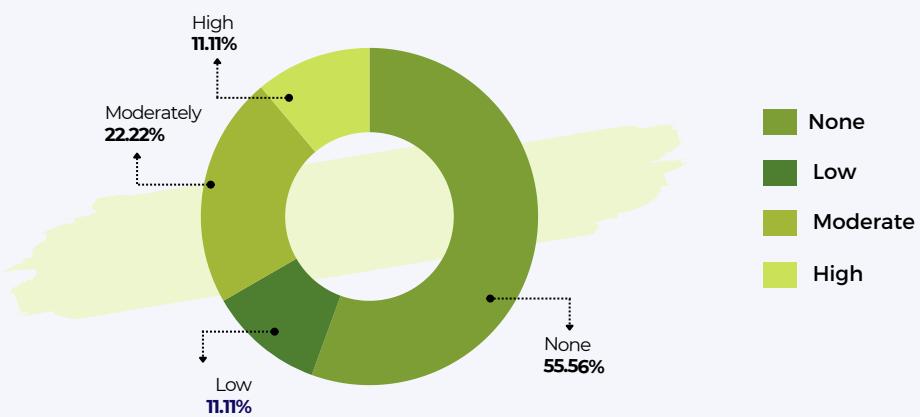
Level of Soil Fertility / Nutrients in Soil	
Very High	22.22
Moderate	77.78
Very Low	11.11



Have any unmanaged native vegetation around plantation or factory? 

Have any unmanaged native vegetation around plantation or factory?	
High	11.11
Moderate	22.22
Low	11.11
None	55.56

Have any unmanaged native vegetation around plantation or factory 

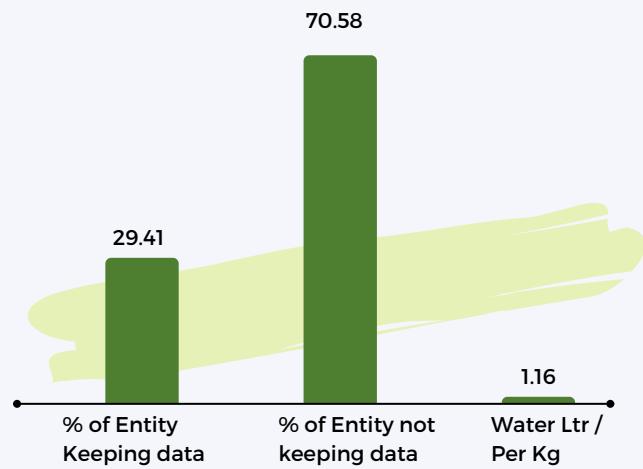


Water management holds particular significance within the tea industry, where responsible and sustainable practices are vital. The tea cultivation process demands a significant amount of water, making efficient water management essential. Within this industry, various strategies are employed to optimize water use, including the recycling and treatment of wastewater, as well as rainwater harvesting. By adopting such practices, tea plantations can reduce water wastage, protect local water bodies from contamination, and minimize their environmental impact.

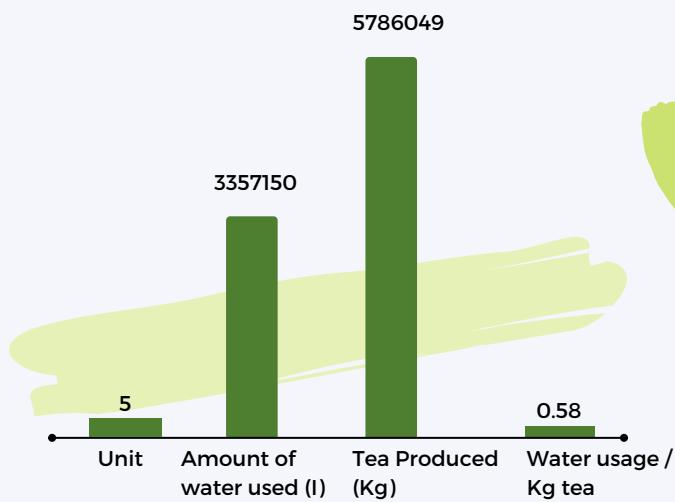
Furthermore, water management in the tea industry extends to the preservation of surrounding ecosystems, as healthy water sources are essential for both the tea plants and the diverse wildlife often found in these regions. In this manner, the tea industry can strike a balance between maintaining its production goals and ensuring environmental sustainability by effectively managing its water resources.

Total water usage by entity per Kg Tea ~~~~~

Baseline Average use of waterltr / Kg	
% of Entity Keeping data	29.41
% of Entity not keeping data	70.58
Water Ltr / Per Kg	1.16

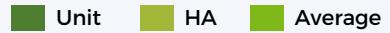
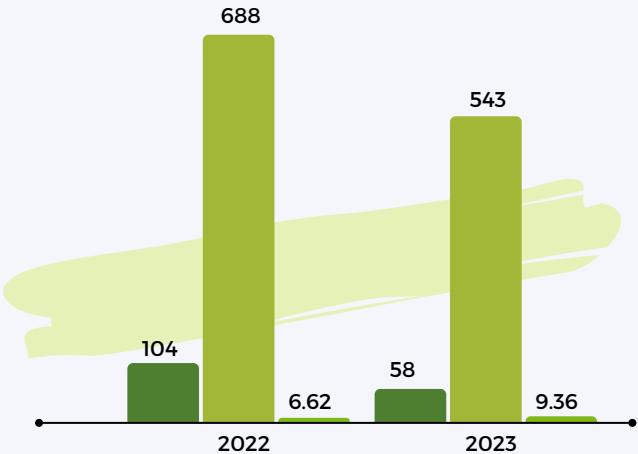


Average Water Usage / Kg Tea ~~~~~



Average Afforestation ~~~~~

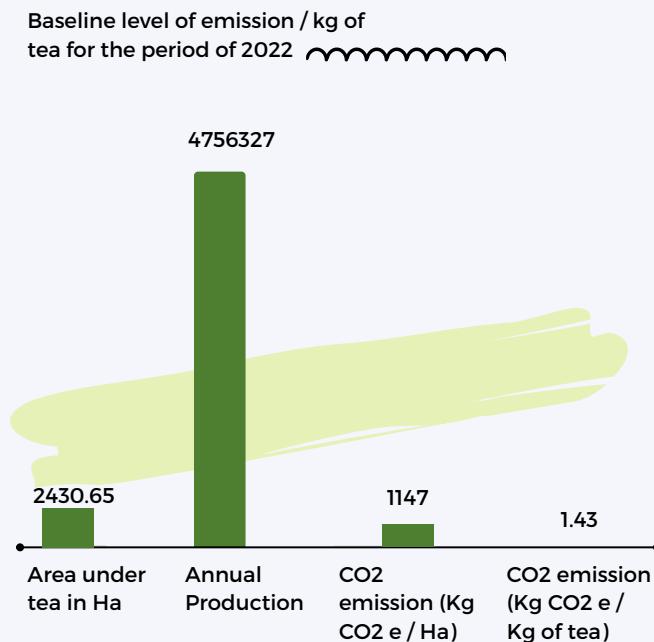
Afforestation			
Year	Unit	HA	Average
2022	104	688	6.62
2023	58	543	9.36

Afforestation is one of the key criteria in trustea where the practice of planting trees in areas that were previously devoid of forest cover, holds immense significance for both environmental and societal well-being. It plays a vital role in combating climate change by acting as a carbon sink, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and mitigating global warming. Afforestation helps stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and protect watersheds, contributing to improved water quality and availability on ground.



Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have a significant impact on the tea industry, affecting both production and the environment. The tea industry's carbon footprint is primarily attributed to energy consumption in tea processing, transportation, and agricultural practices. These emissions contribute to climate change and its associated challenges. Managing GHG emissions in the tea industry is crucial for sustainability. To mitigate these effects, the industry can adopt various strategies such as transitioning to renewable energy sources, optimizing transportation logistics, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices like organic farming and agroforestry. Additionally, carbon offset initiatives, reforestation, and efficient waste management can help balance emissions. By addressing GHG emissions, the tea industry can reduce its environmental impact, enhance its resilience to climate change, and meet the growing consumer demand for environmentally responsible products



trustea, a pioneering sustainability initiative in the Indian tea industry, has taken a significant step towards reducing the carbon footprint in tea production. In the latest version of its standard, V3, Trustea introduced a dedicated section on energy management. This section serves as a crucial addition, emphasizing the importance of energy efficiency and reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

To validate and implement this innovation, trustea conducted a GHG emission pilot study in four tea units across four gardens in Assam and South India. This pilot study marked a pivotal moment in the tea industry's journey towards greater sustainability. By assessing GHG emissions, trustea aims to create a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental impact of tea cultivation, allowing for targeted improvements in energy management and resource use.

## Sample from the pilot study, Glendale Estate in Cool Farm Tool

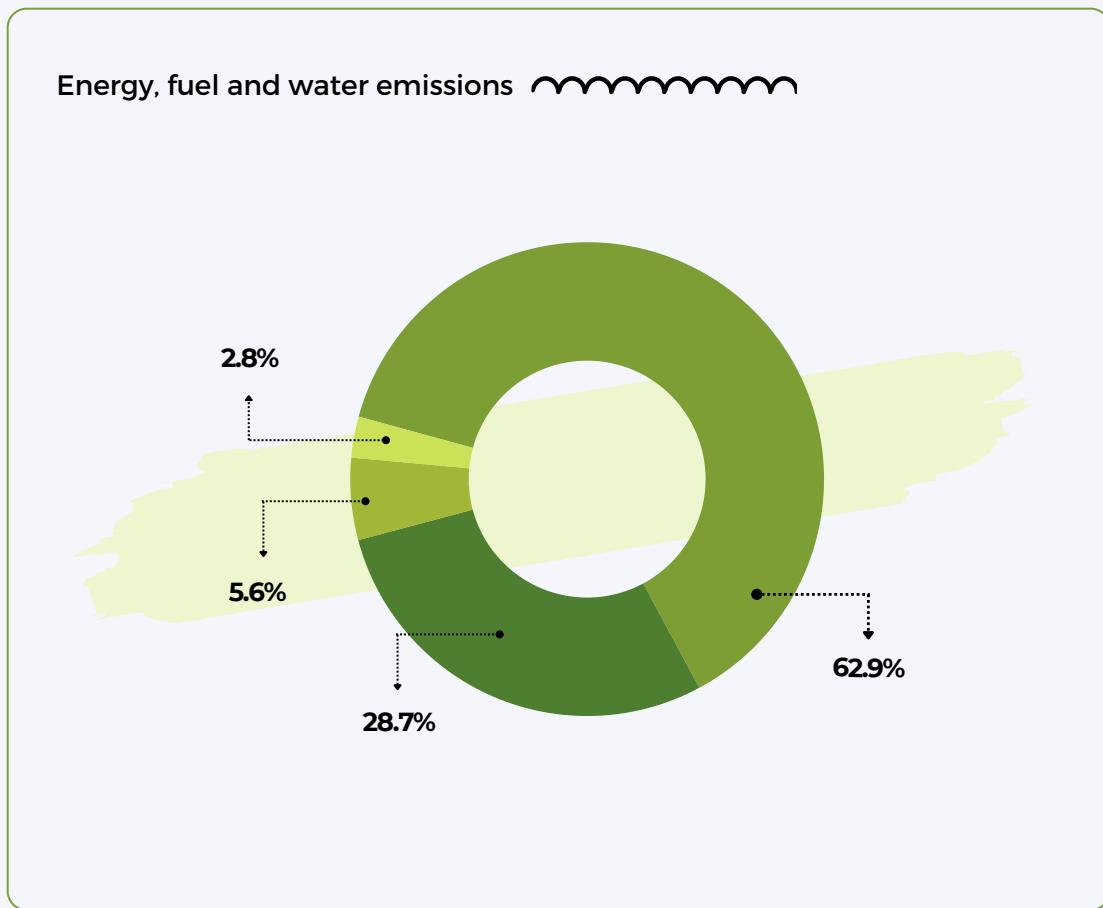
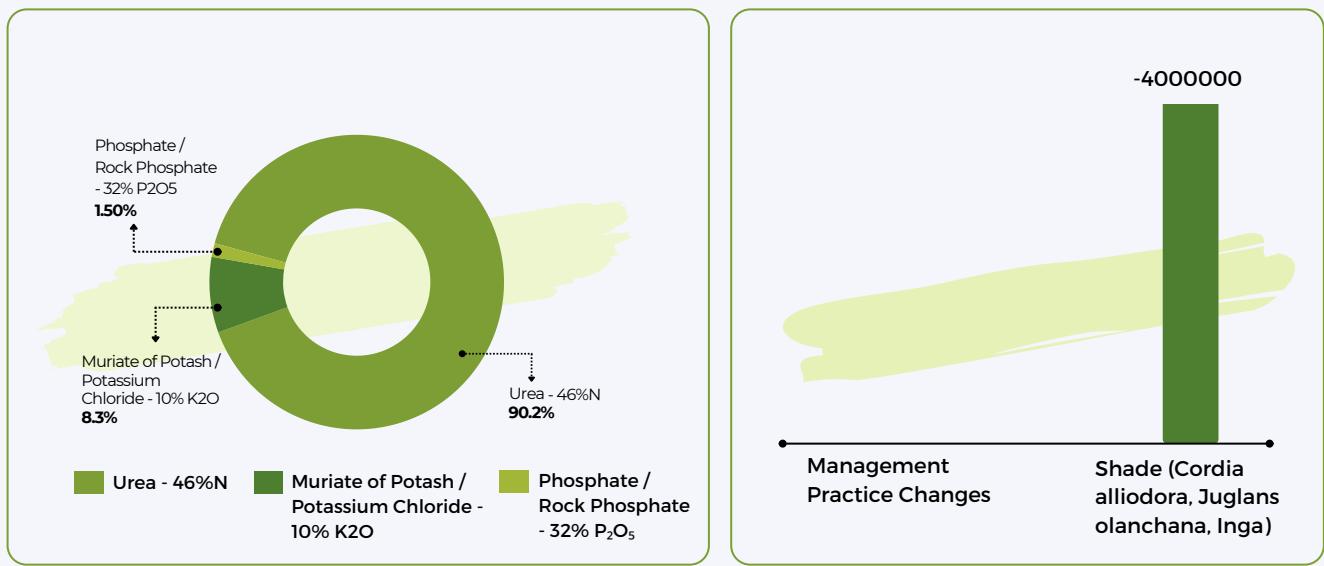


### Detailed data (all values in kg)

Sources	CO <sub>2</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O	CH <sub>4</sub>	Total CO <sub>2</sub> eq.	Per ha	Per kg
Seed production	0	0	0	0	0	0
Residue management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fertiliser production*	299.22k	0	0	299.2k	472.71	0.15
Soil / fertiliser	155.47k	1.49k	0	562.95k	889.35	0.35
Paddy methane	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crop protection	23.72k	0	0	23.72k	37.48	0.01
Carbon stock changes	-4.10M	0	0	-4.10M	-6.4k	-2.07
Energy use (field)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Energy use (processing)	1.70M	0	0	1.70M	2.69k	0.86
Waste water	0	0	0	0	0	0
Off-farm transport	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*Calculated with validated default values for fertiliser production





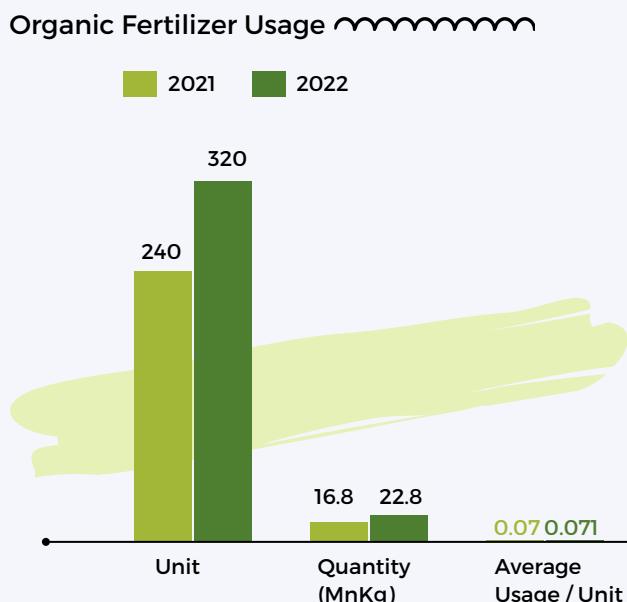
# Climate Resilience

The effectiveness of using organic fertilizers and reducing agrochemicals in the tea industry cannot be overstated. Organic fertilizers, derived from natural sources like compost and manure, enrich the soil with essential nutrients and improve its structure, ultimately enhancing tea plant health and yield. The reduction of agrochemicals minimizes soil and water pollution and conserves the diverse ecosystems found in tea-growing regions.

Usage of Organic Fertilizer		
Year	2021	2022
Unit	240	320
Quantity (MnKg)	16.8	22.8
Average Usage / Unit	0.07	0.071

Beyond the environmental benefits, the shift towards organic fertilizers and reduced agrochemical use promotes soil health and resilience, which is particularly crucial in the face of climate change.

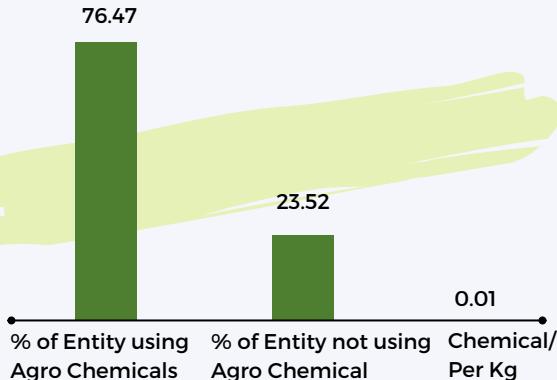
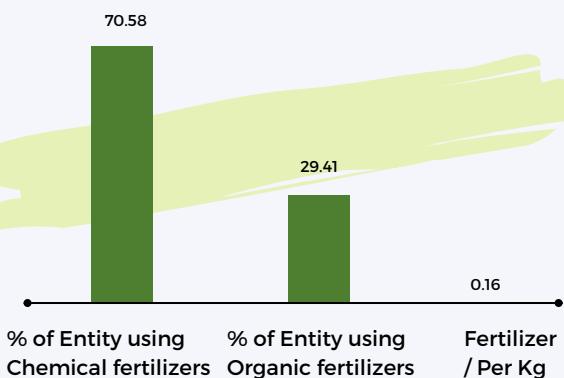
Furthermore, this transition aligns with consumer preferences for healthier and more sustainably produced teas. Overall, the adoption of organic fertilizers and decreased reliance on agrochemicals represents a win-win for the tea industry, enhancing product quality, environmental sustainability, and long-term resilience.



Effective energy management in the tea industry through the optimization of energy consumption and the integration of renewable energy sources is a pivotal strategy for both sustainability and operational efficiency. The tea processing phase involves substantial energy usage, including withering, drying, and packaging. By optimizing energy consumption through measures like energy-efficient machinery and better insulation, the industry can significantly reduce its carbon footprint. Introducing renewable energy sources, such as solar panels or biomass energy, not only helps tea producers cut costs in the long term but also reduces reliance on fossil fuels, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

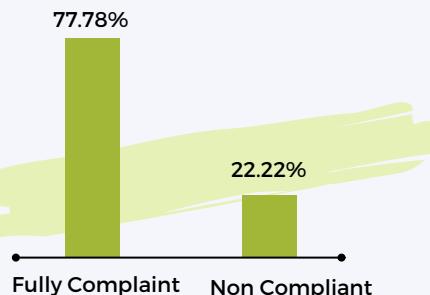
**Baseline Average use of agro-chemical/Kg**

% of Entity using Agro Chemicals	76.47
% of Entity not using Agro Chemical	23.52
Chemical/ Per Kg	0.01

**Baseline Average use of agro-chemical/Kg for the period of 2022**

**Baseline Average use of Chemical Fertilizer/Kg for the period of 2022**

**Baseline Average use of Chemical Fertilizer/Kg for the period of 2022**

% of Entity using Chemical fertilizers	70.58
% of Entity using Organic fertilizers	29.41
Fertilizer/ Per Kg	0.16

This dual approach enhances the industry's environmental stewardship while bolstering its resilience against energy price fluctuations. Additionally, it aligns with global trends towards cleaner and more sustainable production practices, appealing to eco-conscious consumers and elevating the industry's reputation for responsible tea cultivation. As per trustea code version 3, Energy Management encompasses all important facets of these to get the desired outcome and promote the positive impact in this field.

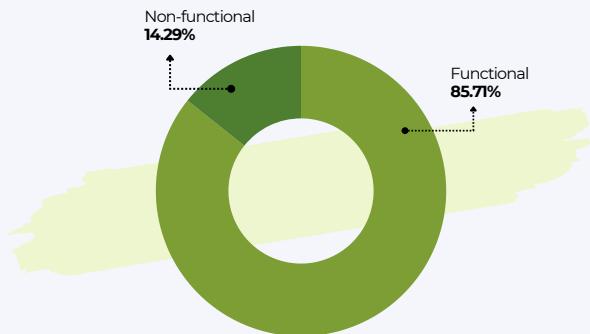
**Follow GAP guidelines for the storage and application of fertilizers**


# Safety

Workplace safety in the tea industry is of paramount importance, with a focus on training and awareness regarding job-related risks. The tea cultivation and processing sector can be physically demanding and sometimes hazardous, with workers exposed to various risks, such as heavy machinery, exposure to agrochemicals, and slippery surfaces. Implementing comprehensive training programs equips employees with the knowledge and skills to mitigate these risks and respond effectively in case of accidents.

Existance of POSH committee

Functional	85.71%
Non-functional	14.29%



Furthermore, fostering a culture of safety through continuous awareness campaigns encourages workers to be vigilant and take preventive measures. Prioritizing workplace safety not only safeguards the well-being of tea industry employees but also enhances overall productivity and contributes to the industry's sustainable growth by reducing injuries and lost working hours. This approach ensures that those who contribute to the production of our beloved beverage do so in a safe and secure environment.

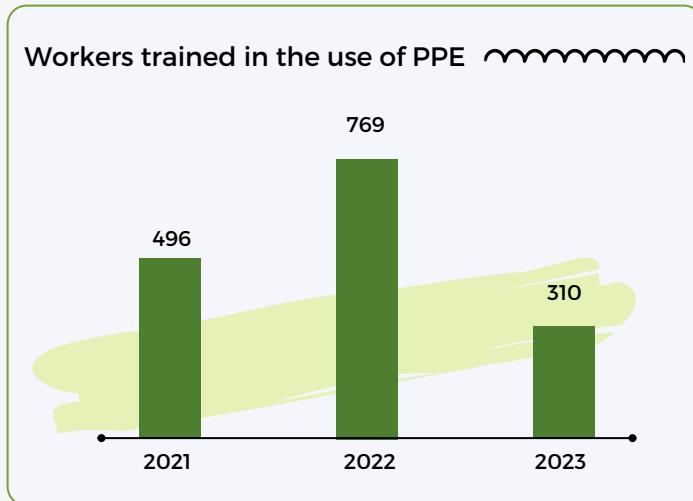
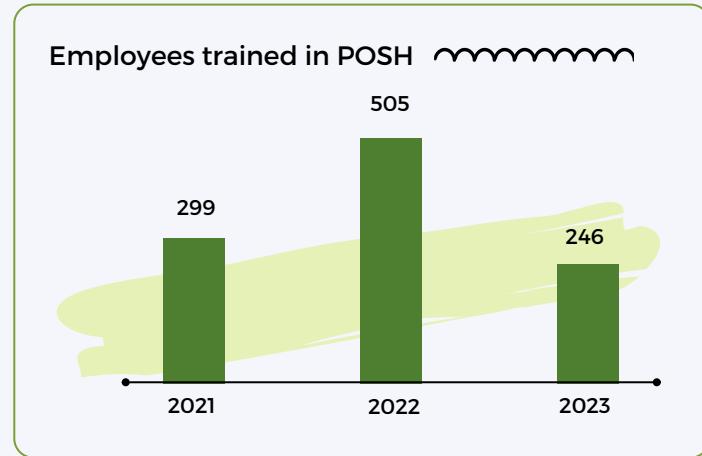


*"There's a lot of attention to safety, after trustea certification. I feel very comfortable working here."*

*Rajalakshmi, Tea plucker, Gudalur, Nilgiris*

Ensuring women's safety in the workplace, including adhering to the requirements of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, is an essential aspect of trustea Standard. The POSH Act is a legislative measure in India that aims to prevent and address workplace sexual harassment, specifically targeting harassment against women.

Employees trained in POSH	
Year	Unit
2021	299
2022	505
2023	246



Workers trained in the use of PPE	
Year	Unit
2021	496
2022	769
2023	310

To foster women's safety, employers in the tea industry and other sectors must comply with the POSH Act requirements and creating a safe environment for women in the tea industry and other sectors is not only a legal requirement but also a moral and ethical imperative. This ensures that every woman in the workplace can exercise her rights, work without fear, and contribute to the industry's growth and success

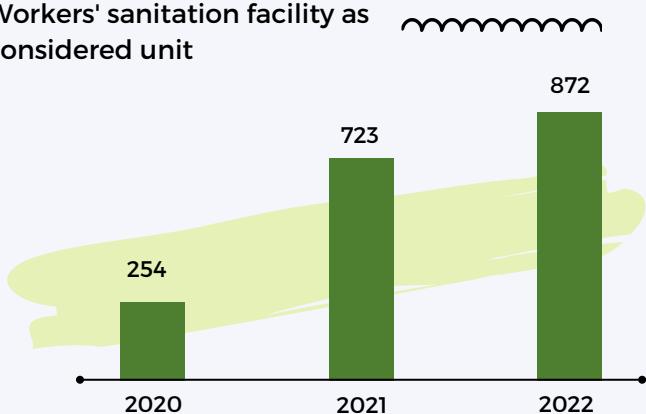
# Livelihood

Improving the livelihood of tea workers through adherence to trustea Standard is a laudable and necessary endeavor within the Indian tea industry. As a sustainability standard, trustea encompasses a range of practices, including fair wages, safe working conditions, gender equality, access to healthcare and education and all other statutory requirements. By embracing this standard, the tea industry can uplift the quality of life for its workers. Fair wages and improved working conditions not only provide financial stability but also enhance the overall well-being of tea laborers and their families. Gender equality initiatives empower women workers, promoting inclusivity and creating opportunities for growth and advancement.

## Worker's Sanitation Facility as considered Unit

Year	Unit
2020	254
2021	723
2022	872

## Workers' sanitation facility as considered unit

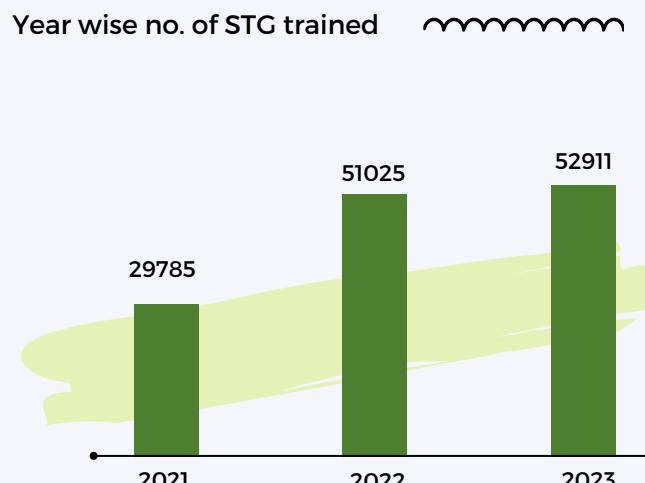


Access to healthcare and education contributes to the long-term welfare of the workforce, ensuring a healthier, more skilled, and economically self-reliant community. As the industry adopts sustainability standards, it not only cultivates high-quality tea but also nurtures the growth and prosperity of the individuals at its core, setting a positive example for responsible and ethical business practices. The graphical representation of the survey sample is considered as the baseline to study further output in this regard.

trustea standard helps to promote livelihoods among small tea growers through comprehensive training programs.

Smallholders, often with limited resources, constitute a significant portion of the tea cultivation sector. Equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for efficient and sustainable tea farming can have transformative effects on their livelihoods. Training initiatives by the Implementing Partners cover various aspects, from proper plucking techniques and pest management to sustainable agricultural practices that help the market access where they can sell their product. By improving their expertise, small tea growers can increase their crop yields, product quality, and market competitiveness. In doing so, they become active contributors to the growth and sustainability of the tea industry, while their communities benefit from increased economic resilience.

Year wise no. of STG trained	
Year	Number
2021	29785
2022	51025
2023	52911



Chapter

01 02 03 04 05 06

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05



trustea's Impacts

# Creating Value through trustea Implementation System

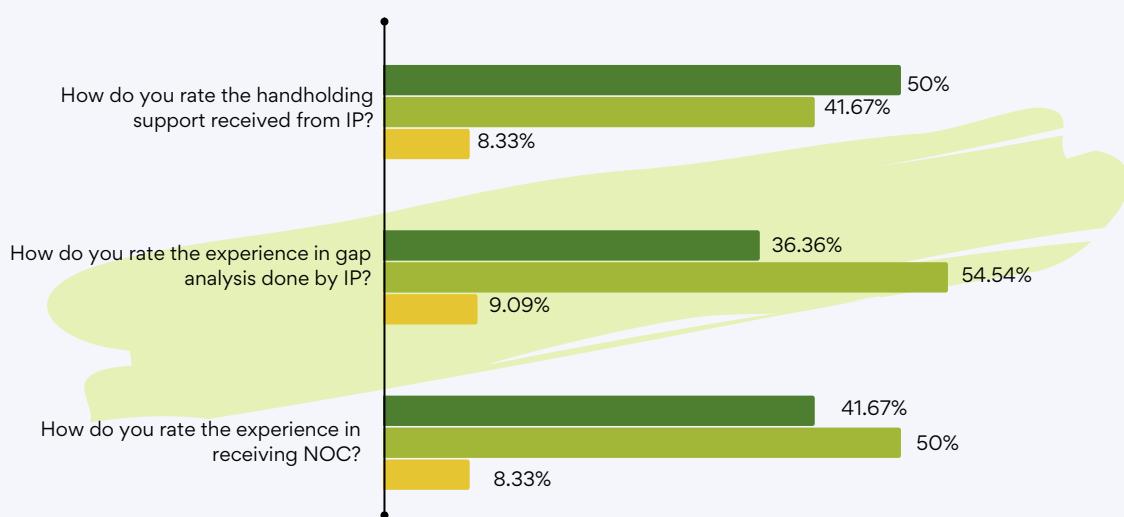
trustea has a unique feature of providing implementation support completely free to interested entities while joining the program. Implementing Partner (IP) plays a crucial role in the trustea certification process by actively engaging with tea entities and guiding them through the necessary steps to meet the standard's requirements. One significant aspect of their contribution is analyzing the existing gaps in the entity's operations. These gaps can encompass various elements, including environmental sustainability, worker welfare, and quality assurance, all of which are integral to trustea certification.

The collective efforts of implementing partners, trained professionals, and the tea entity create a collaborative environment that facilitates progress toward trustea certification. Through their expertise and guidance, the tea industry can align itself with sustainable practices, promote ethical working conditions, and contribute to a more responsible and environmentally friendly tea production process. The survey portrays the outcome of their effort in the field.



## IP Feedback

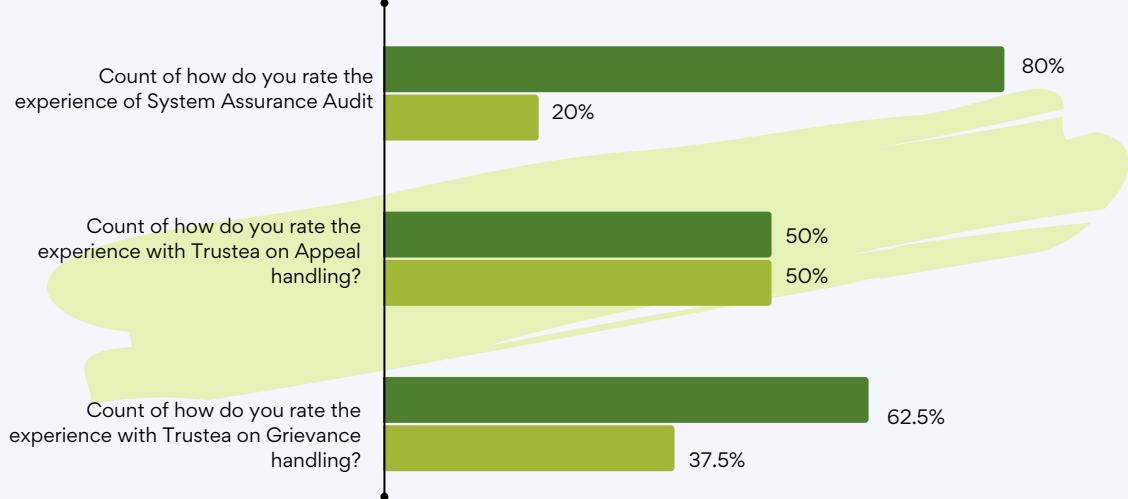
■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Poor



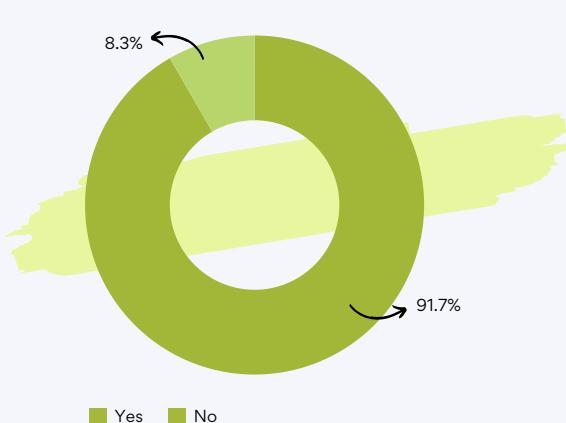
# trustea Internal System Outcomes

To successfully implement and adhere to a sustainability standard, it's imperative that the internal system of the program aligns with all necessary activities outlined in the internal protocols, policies, and guidelines. These internal practices serve as the roadmap for trustea and its relevant stakeholders to meet the purpose of having an effective MEL system in place

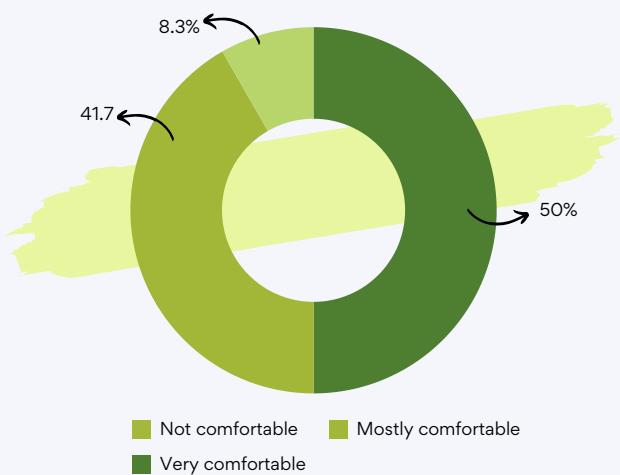
## Appeal/Grievance Handling



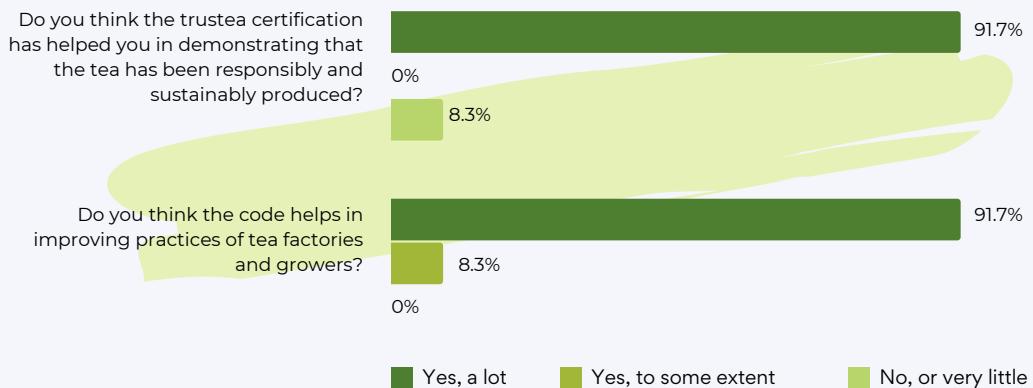
## Have you been formally trained on tCMS?



## How comfortable are you in using tCMS?



## trustea Certification Feedback ~~~~~



## Intended Positive Impacts



### Improved Safety in the Workplace

The trustea code significantly enhanced workplace safety for tea workers through a series of targeted initiatives and strict adherence to safety protocols. One of the most impactful aspects was the comprehensive training provided to workers, especially concerning handling hazardous chemicals. With 94.44% of workers confirming they received such training, the initiative ensured that employees were well informed about the potential dangers and the necessary precautions to mitigate risks. This training not only helped prevent accidents but also empowered workers with knowledge, fostering a safer and more secure work environment.

The widespread use of safety equipment among tea workers further underscored the positive influence of the trustea code. A remarkable 98.5% of workers confirmed that they used safety equipment while operating machines, indicating high compliance with safety protocols. This adherence was crucial in preventing injuries and accidents in the industrial environment of tea processing factories. The provision and use of safety gear such as gloves, goggles, and protective clothing ensured that workers were shielded from the mechanical and chemical hazards inherent in their daily tasks.



Moreover, the availability of safety equipment was a testament to the commitment of factories to worker safety. With 88.8% of workers confirming that their factories were well-equipped with the necessary safety gear, it was evident that there was a robust infrastructure in place to support safe working conditions. This not only helped in immediate risk management but also instilled a culture of safety within the workforce, promoting long-term adherence to safe practices.

### Safety at the workplace



The overall sense of security among workers was significantly high, with 98.6% affirming that they felt safe while working in the factories. This overwhelming majority indicated that the measures implemented were effective and that workers trusted the systems in place to protect their well-being. Feeling safe at work was crucial for employee morale and productivity, as it reduced anxiety and enhanced focus, allowing workers to perform their duties more efficiently and with greater confidence.

Specifically, the safety of women workers saw notable improvements under the trustea code, with 93.8% of women workers reporting that they felt safe in their work environment. This was a critical development, as women often faced unique safety challenges in the workplace. Ensuring their safety not only supported gender equity but also contributed to a more inclusive and supportive work environment. The trustea initiative's focus on creating a safe and respectful workplace for all employees, regardless of gender, helped in building a more resilient and committed workforce.



### Increased revenue for entities

The trustea certification has emerged as a vital tool for improving the financial performance of entities within the tea industry. By adhering to this certification, many tea producers have experienced notable economic benefits, underscoring the importance of standardised quality and ethical practices in today's market.

According to the respondents, the certification has been financially beneficial for several entities. Notably, 25% of the managerial staff at the tea estates reported a significant increase in revenue due to the certification. Additionally, 50% of the respondents acknowledged experiencing a positive impact on their revenues, though to a lesser extent. However, the remaining respondents indicated no noticeable improvement.

Moreover, every interviewed owner of Small Tea Growers (STGs) and Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) confirmed that adopting the code has led to financial sustainability.

This financial boost is primarily attributed to enhanced buyer interest and the improved marketability of Trustea-certified tea. The certification not only assures buyers of the tea's quality and ethical production standards but also enhances the overall appeal and competitiveness of the tea in the market.



## **Increase in productivity**

The implementation of certification codes in tea estates has had a profound impact on productivity and operational efficiency, highlighting the transformative potential of industry standards.

Approximately 67% of Tea Estate (TE) officials reported a notable increase in productivity due to adopting the certification code. This increase was primarily attributed to the implementation of more efficient farming practices and better adherence to industry standards. In addition to productivity gains, these officials observed improved operational efficiencies, such as more effective workforce management, optimised use of fertilisers and pesticides, and enhanced processing techniques.

While there was no consistent trend in operational costs across all estates, the certification process, in many instances, contributed to streamlining operations. This streamlining led to better resource management, such as reduced wastage and more precise allocation of inputs, thereby indirectly influencing cost structures. Overall, the certification has fostered a more efficient and productive operational environment for many tea estates.



## **Improved labour practices**

The implementation of the trustea certification code has brought about significant improvements in labour practices within the tea industry. By addressing critical issues such as child labour and sexual harassment, the code has played a vital role in ensuring safer and more ethical working conditions across the sector.

Evidence from the field suggests that the trustea certification has had a markedly positive impact on labour practices in the tea ecosystem. It has significantly contributed to addressing and mitigating issues like child labour and sexual harassment, creating a safer and more ethical working environment. About 92% of the managerial staff at the tea estates confirmed that adopting the code has significantly reduced the use of child labour in the supply chain. However, there remains room for improvement among Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) and Small Tea Growers (STGs), as only 25% of them confirmed receiving training on the subject.

### Improved labour practices ~~~~~



Regarding sexual harassment, approximately 89% of Trustea officials interviewed confirmed that women in the tea gardens received training on issues concerning sexual harassment, including methods of redressal. Furthermore, 95% of the women workers interviewed reported that they had never faced sexual harassment, indicating a substantial positive impact of the training programs.

Wages at most certified entities meet or exceed the minimum wage requirements, although gender wage gaps persist in some instances. The certification has also positively impacted community development, with notable improvements in school enrollment rates among workers' families. Around 89% of Trustea officials and 75% of tea estate managerial staff reported no wage discrimination between male and female workers, highlighting a move towards more equitable pay practices.

In summary, the trustea certification has significantly enhanced labour practices, ensuring safer, more ethical working conditions and fostering community development within the tea industry.



### Improved Soil Conservation and Waste Management System

Soil conservation is fundamental to sustainable tea production, as it ensures the long-term health and productivity of tea crops. Healthy soil is the cornerstone of robust tea plants, providing essential nutrients and a stable environment for growth. Sustainable soil management practices, such as contour planting, terracing, and the use of cover crops, help prevent soil erosion, maintain soil structure, and enhance water retention. Tea producers can minimise environmental pollution and promote biodiversity by reducing reliance on chemical fertilisers through these practices. Healthy soil supports a diverse range of microorganisms and plants, contributing to a balanced and resilient ecosystem.

Effective waste management is equally critical in sustainable tea production. Proper disposal and recycling of agricultural waste, such as pruned tea leaves and stems, can significantly benefit the soil when composted. Composting returns valuable nutrients to the land, enriching the soil and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers. Additionally, managing chemical waste from pesticides and fertilizers is vital to prevent the contamination of water sources and soil, safeguarding the health of local communities and ecosystems. Implementing comprehensive waste management strategies helps maintain a clean and sustainable environment, ensuring that tea production does not harm the surrounding natural resources.

The Trustea Code promotes a variety of environmental practices aimed at enhancing soil conservation and waste management. More than 55% of Trustea officials interviewed confirmed that the entities adopted rigorous to very rigorous soil conservation measures. However, about 75% of Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) and Small Tea Growers (STGs) reported only minimal or moderate measures in this regard, indicating a significant area for improvement. This disparity highlights the need for continued education and support to ensure all tea producers implement effective soil conservation techniques.

Similarly, approximately 89% of Trustea officers interviewed confirmed the existence of robust waste management systems within their entities. These entities reported virtually no dumping of waste in nearby areas, demonstrating a strong commitment to environmental stewardship. It was encouraging to note that BLFs and STGs were also sensitized to the importance of proper waste management, with about 88% confirming that they did not engage in waste dumping. This widespread adherence to waste management protocols reflects a growing awareness and commitment to sustainability across the tea industry.

In conclusion, soil conservation and waste management are integral to sustainable tea production. By maintaining healthy soil and managing waste effectively, tea producers can ensure the long-term viability of their crops, protect local ecosystems, and contribute to a healthier environment. The Trustea Code's emphasis on these practices is helping to drive positive change, although there is still room for improvement, particularly among smaller producers. Continued efforts to promote and implement these sustainable practices will be crucial for the future of the tea industry.



# Unintended Positive Impacts

## Increased Participation of the STGs in the Certification Process

One of the most notable unintended consequences of the certification process has been the surge in small-scale tea growers' participation. Initially, the stringent requirements of certification codes were perceived as a significant barrier for smallholders, who often lacked the resources and expertise to navigate the complex procedures. However, the increased visibility and market demand for certified tea incentivised cooperatives and local organisations to step in and provide the necessary technical assistance and training. As a result, many smallholders have successfully adopted sustainable practices, boosting their incomes and contributing to the overall resilience of the tea supply chain.

The economic constraints faced by small tea growers (STGs) in India often hinder their ability to provide comprehensive welfare measures for their workers. The lack of formal employment contracts and limited access to social security benefits leave workers in a precarious situation, vulnerable to exploitation and inadequate working conditions. However, there are signs of progress

**A survey conducted by Consultivo reveals that the majority of STGs are making significant strides in improving labour welfare.**

- >> All (100%) of the STGs interviewed** for the survey confirmed that they kept formal records of wages and salaries, a fundamental step towards ensuring transparency and accountability.
- >> 62.5% of the respondents reported** having policies in place that restrict adolescent workers from working more than 27 hours per week, reflecting a commitment to protecting younger workers.
- >> Furthermore, half of the surveyed STGs indicated** that they had policies stipulating maximum working hours for all workers, aiming to prevent overwork and ensure a healthier work-life balance.
- >> Moreover, 50% of the STGs confirmed** the existence of functional grievance redressal systems, providing workers with a platform to voice their concerns and seek resolutions.

These developments suggest a positive trend towards improved labour welfare among small tea growers in India. While challenges remain, particularly in terms of economic stability and comprehensive social security, the proactive measures being implemented indicate a growing recognition of the importance of worker welfare.

By continuing to support STGs through technical assistance, policy advocacy, and market incentives, there is potential to further enhance the welfare and working conditions of labourers in this crucial sector of the tea industry.



## Greater Collaboration and Knowledge-sharing among Tea Estates and Stakeholder

The code has fostered a remarkable increase in collaboration and knowledge-sharing among tea estates and various stakeholders. By establishing a common framework and set of standards, the code has facilitated open dialogues and the exchange of best practices. This structured approach has not only streamlined the adoption of sustainable practices but has also cultivated a strong sense of community and collective responsibility within the industry.

The implementation of the code has acted as a catalyst for breaking down silos that previously existed between different players in the tea industry. The qualitative data obtained from the stakeholders suggest that the producers, suppliers, and distributors now engage in more frequent and meaningful interactions, sharing insights and strategies that benefit the entire value chain. This collaborative environment has led to innovative solutions to common challenges, such as improving labour conditions, reducing environmental impact, and enhancing the quality of tea production.

Furthermore, the sense of community fostered by the code extends beyond professional relationships. It has also engendered a deeper connection to the broader mission of sustainability.

Stakeholders are increasingly viewing their efforts not just as business requirements but as contributions to a global movement towards environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

This shift in perspective is vital for sustaining long-term commitment to the code's principles and for driving continuous advancements in sustainable tea production.



# Unintended Negative Impact

## Increased Financial Burden

Adopting the trustea Impact Code has imposed some financial burden on some tea producers. The initial costs associated with implementing the code's rigorous standards had to be borne by the producers, and they had to invest in sustainable farming practices, infrastructure upgrades, and compliance with stringent labor regulations.

Additionally, the ongoing expenses associated with maintaining the certification add to the financial strain. Continuous monitoring to ensure compliance, certification fees, and training programmes for workers were recurring costs that producers had to bear. These expenses were necessary to uphold the high standards set by the Impact Code.

Despite these challenges, there is a recognition of the long-term benefits that these investments brought. Improved marketability and enhanced operational efficiencies were some of the advantages the producers reportedly enjoyed. Furthermore, sustainable practices led to more efficient resource use and cost savings over time.

A survey of tea estate managers and assistant managers revealed mixed experiences regarding the financial impact. While 67% of the respondents observed an increase in operational costs due to the adoption of the code, they reported that this increase was manageable. On average, these respondents noted a 5% rise in operational costs, which they believed was outweighed by the benefits accrued from certification. The improvements in marketability, efficiency, and overall sustainability were seen as valuable returns on their investment, justifying the initial and ongoing expenses.

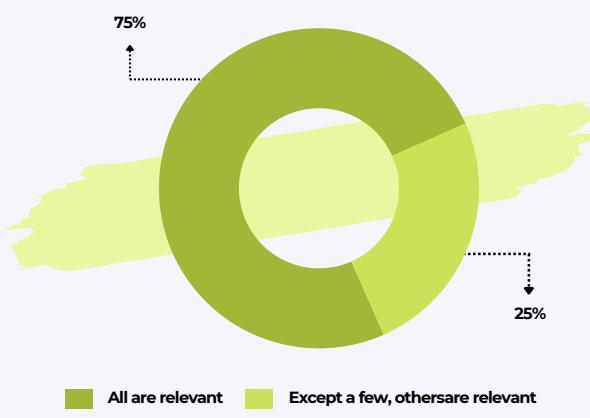
In conclusion, while the adoption of the trustea Impact Code has led to an increase in financial burden for some tea producers, particularly in the short term, the long-term benefits of certification are significant. Enhanced marketability, improved operational efficiencies, and adherence to sustainable and ethical practices provide a compelling case for embracing these standards despite the financial challenges they may pose initially.



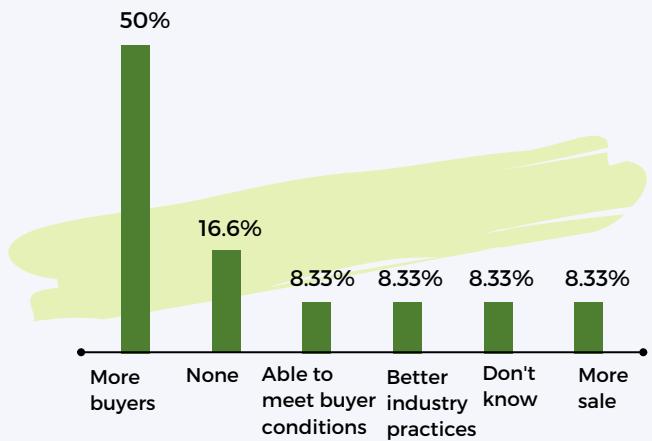
# Entity understanding on trustea standard

Within the trustea universe, the entity, typically representing tea manufacturers or producers, stands as the most critical stakeholder in driving the program's sustainability objectives. Their engagement and commitment are fundamental to the success of trustea. As the primary actors in the tea supply chain, their practices and understanding of the standard directly impact the environment, workers, and the quality of tea produced. Therefore, the entity's feedback is invaluable and serves as one of the cornerstone components of Trustea's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.

Do you think the parameters of the code are relevant for the tea industry? ~~~~~



What key benefits have you received from trustea certification? ~~~~~



“ —

*The biggest impact of trustea has been on the mindset of stakeholders, whether in the factory or the STGs. We are thinking about safety, about protecting the environment, and wearing protective gear... There is a care element”.*

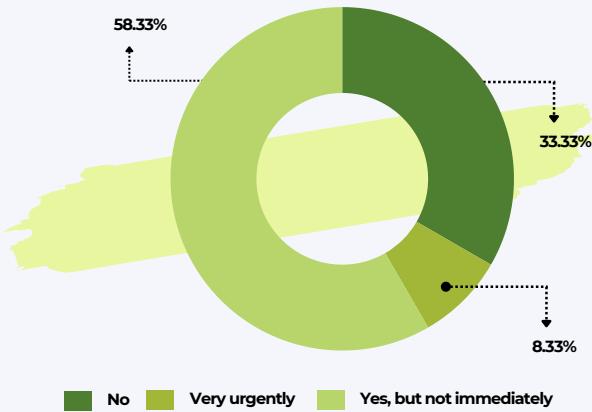
*Mehul Varma, Director, Sanjeevani Tea Industries, Assam*

## trustea's learning and future action

trustea's action points following the monitoring and evaluation process, derived through surveys, interviews, and audit data, are a crucial component of its commitment to continuous improvement in the tea industry's sustainability. They are formulated as per the process based on the insights gathered through comprehensive surveys, in-depth interviews, and thorough audit data analysis. The results of these processes help identify gaps and strengths in sustainability practices within the industry.

Action points may include recommendations for refining and optimizing various aspects of trustea standard and its internal process, such as creating more awareness on calculating data for water and energy management, awareness training for worker welfare, recording environmental protection activity, data capturing on traceability and similar. trustea will use these action points to guide its engagement with tea entities and provide tailored support for improving sustainability practices. By translating the findings of the M&E process into practical, actionable steps, trustea not only maintains the credibility of its certification but also ensures that the tea industry continues to evolve towards more sustainable and responsible practices, benefiting all stakeholders.

Do you think the parameters of the code are relevant for the tea industry? ~~~~~



Chapter

01 02 03 04 05 **06**

# 06



trustea's methodology

# trustea's methodology, data sampling, learning and future action

**Area:** Tea growing regions in India - Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu  
trustea conducted a detailed study to derive the baseline report with the help of different types of surveys, interviews, and audit reports as mentioned here –

 <b>17</b> verified entities were covered, standalone estates, estates with factories, BLFs	 <b>51</b> Face-to-face interview forms were collected.	Data Sampling – tCMS tool report – Audit report 2022 & 2023.	Pilot projects for specific areas like GHG emission and Power consumption, 3 Estates and 2 BLF from Assam and Tamil Nadu were considered while trustea secretariat has conducted this study.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Consultivo has conducted an assessment of selected verified entities.**

<b>In Assam</b>	<b>In West Bengal.</b>	<b>Interviews have been conducted.</b>	<b>Assessment has conducted during:</b> <b>May, 2024</b>
<b>2</b> BLF Estates have been covered	<b>3</b> BLF Estates have been covered	 <b>110</b> interviews have been conducted.	

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## People and Process Involved

Parameter	tCMS	Contributing Source	1st Reviewer	2nd Reviewer
Entity Survey	x	IP	trustea Program Manager	Sr. Manager - System Assurance & MEL - trustea
trustea		Entity Feedback		
Pilot Project		trustea Program Manager	Sr. Manager - System Assurance & MEL - trustea	
CB		Entity	trustea Program Manager	Sr. Manager - System Assurance & MEL - trustea
IP		Entity	trustea Program Manager	Sr. Manager - System Assurance & MEL - trustea

## Considered qualification for Survey

Minimum 5 years of experience in Sustainability programs	Basic graduation	Trained on M&E basicprinciples
* Reviewers' qualification as per trustea's qualification matrix		

# INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE STATEMENT

To  
The Management of Trustea Sustainable Tea Foundation

## Introduction and objectives of work

Consultivo Business Solutions Pvt Ltd (Consultivo) has been engaged by Trustea Sustainable Tea Foundation (hereinafter abbreviated "trustea") to conduct an independent Impact assessment of the activities of the selected entities. This Impact Assessment Statement applies to the related information included within the scope of work described in this report.

The assessment process was conducted in line with the Consultivo internal protocol for Impact Assessment, which is developed based on requirements of The Companies (CSR Policy) Amendment Rules 2021 - India, ISO 26000, IFC/World Bank, national, and international guidelines, and relevant industry best practices like Theory of Change (ToC) and Log Frame Approach. The relevant data and information have been verified by Consultivo through a hybrid mode (both onsite and remote engagement) of data collection - onsite survey, online survey, focus group discussion, key informant interviews and observation.

## Basis of our Opinion

As part of the assurance process, a multi-disciplinary team of sustainability specialists performed assurance work for selected sample sites. We adopted a risk-based approach, that is, we concentrated our assurance efforts on the issues of high material relevance to trustea project and its key stakeholders.

We conducted site-level assessments at selected locations within the reporting boundaries, covering areas in India. These boundaries encompass three tea estates and two Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) in Assam, as well as two estates and three Bought Leaf Factories in West Bengal.

## Our findings

On the basis of our methodology and the activities described above, it is our opinion that the project described in this report demonstrates impact benefitting stakeholders through the project's output, outcome and long-term effects with a strategic intent for social change.

## Statement of independence, impartiality and competence

Consultivo is an independent professional services company that specialises in ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and Sustainability in providing independent assurance services. Consultivo has implemented a Code of Ethics across the business to maintain high ethical standards among staff in their day-to-day business activities. We are particularly vigilant in the prevention of conflicts of interest. The impact assessment team has extensive experience in conducting need assessment, baseline, midline and end line study, monitoring & evaluation (M&E) and impact programs over different thematic areas, geographic regions with an excellent understanding of Consultivo's standard methodology for the Independent Impact Assessment of development projects.



**Saikat Basu**

CEO, Consultivo

3 May 2024

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